

personages, and received divine messages. She had at times active delusions of persecution, suspected poison in her food, perceived noxious vapors in her room, and thought herself surrounded by enemies who were determined to take her life previous to the birth of her child. After several months she learned in a vision, that her child had been miraculously born without her knowledge, and that she was henceforth to occupy a high position. From this time her delusions of persecution ceased to distress her and she became cheerful and hopeful. She now spends much of her time in reading and writing. She displays a pleasant interest in her associates, is kind to her children and grandchildren, and her letters and conversation are coherent, pleasant, and natural. When questioned about her delusions, she asserts calmly, and without trace of excitement, her divine character and proclaims her divine mission. The tumults, anxiety, and distress of mind, which accompanied the stage of transformation have passed away, and she now bids fair to live a quiet, peaceful, and uneventful life the remainder of her days.

J. G. KIERNAN.

e.—THERAPEUTICS OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM.

MENTHOL AND ITS ACTION.—The results of Dr. A. Schmidt's experiments (*Centralblatt für klin. Med.*, Aug. 8, 1885) confirm the statements of McDonald and others, regarding the local anæsthetic properties of peppermint-camphor. Oil of peppermint is a mixture of a fluid hydro-carbon, menthen, $C_{10}H_{16}$, and of menthol, $C_{10}H_{18}OH$ the latter being also known as peppermint-camphor. The German, English, and American preparations of oil of peppermint contain a smaller portion of menthol than do the Chinese and Japanese, and consequently the latter preparations are solid and crystalline at ordinary temperatures. Menthol has long been used by the Chinese and Japanese for the relief of headache and especially toothache. Delieux de Savignac, McDonald and Rosenthal, have described the analgesic properties of the drug when locally applied. The effects produced a few years ago with the headache-sticks (Japanese?) suggested to Schmidt the idea of studying the physiological action of menthol. His experiments were made on animals and men, and finally he used it therapeutically. He obtained the following results: A frog's leg dipped in a weak solution of menthol in alcohol and water became completely anæsthetic after ten minutes. In warm-blooded animals the anæsthetic effect appeared more quickly and was more marked. A one per cent. alcoholic solution diminished the sensibility after a few minutes, but it required a ten per cent. solution to produce an effect equivalent to that of a one per cent. cocaine solution. The effect, however, of menthol lasted longer than that of cocaine. Irritation and injection of the cornea followed. The anæsthesia produced by pure crystals of menthol upon the cornea lasted from one half hour to three hours. Anæsthesia of the nasal mucous membrane was also produced after ten minutes by a ten

per cent. solution. A solution made with olive oil, though not followed by so much irritation, had less anæsthetic effect. Applied to the human conjunctiva, menthol causes severe pain, photophobia, and effusion of tears. The pain lasts a quarter of an hour, then gives place to a feeling of coolness, which in turn is followed by that of warmth. The conjunctival injection lasted several hours. A similar local anæsthetic effect is produced by applications to the tongue.

Therapeutically S. obtained good results by local applications in migraine and superficial neuralgias. As, in applying it to the tongue and mucous membrane of the mouth, it was noticed that profuse salivation resulted, S. reasoned that it would be useful given internally to increase the secretion of gastric juice and to thin the sputa. In this he was not disappointed, as it worked like a charm. Unfortunately cases are not given. The following conclusions are drawn : 1. Menthol is an anæsthetic for such nerve-terminations with which it can come directly in contact. 2. It especially stimulates the secretory nerves.

ON THE INCOMPATIBILITY OF CHLORAL-HYDRATE AND ALCOHOL IN THE PRESENCE OF POTASSIUM BROMIDE. *Boston Med. and Surg. Jour.*, vol. cxiii., 4.—Prof. F. H. Markoe received a bottle containing the following mixture :

℞ Bromid. potass.,
 Chloral hydrat. āā 3 iij.
 Tr. opii et camph.,
 Syr. zingiber. āā ʒ iss. ℥

It was sent to him for investigation, as the physician who had prescribed the medicine claimed that the druggist had made a mistake. The mixture consisted of two layers, a clear dark-brown liquid floating upon a light-colored dense liquid. On investigation Markoe found that the supernatant fluid consisted of chloral alcoholate, which was formed by the union of the chloral with the alcohol in the paregoric. The bromide was contained apparently in the under layer of liquid. The danger of prescribing chloral with alcoholic preparations from this is obvious.

THE ABUSE OF BROMIDE OF POTASSIUM IN THE TREATMENT OF TRAUMATIC NEURASTHENIA.—Page (*Med. Times*, April 4, 1885), believing that the symptoms following spinal concussion are in great part of a neurasthenic nature, condemns the prolonged use of bromide on the ground that it only adds to the depressed condition of the nervous system already existing.

THE PHYSIOLOGICAL ACTION OF CONVALLERIA ON THE NERVOUS SYSTEM.—Dr. Steller contributes (*Therapeut. Gaz.*, Sept. 15, 1885) the results of his experiments with the active principle of the lily of the valley on frogs. The principal effect which

he obtained was a loss of reflex activity, "of complicated origin, but no doubt dependent primarily upon the depression of the sensory portions of the cord." The experimenter concludes that the results of his experiments show that the drug does not possess much influence on the nervous system in general, and hence the drug can be pushed in disease of the heart "without fear of the complication of any effects on the nervous system." Though these conclusions may be correct, still the experiments seem to be open to criticism, and, in particular, because they have only to do with the frog and mostly with lethal doses, and hence inferences as to the effect of therapeutic doses on *man* are hardly sound.

SALICYLATE OF COCAINE FOR TRIGEMINAL NEURALGIA.—Dr. Max Schneider reports (*Allg. med. Central-Ztg.*, 1885, 53) a case treated successfully by subcutaneous injections of salicylate of cocaine. The patient, a woman, was attacked for the third time. The effect of the treatment was most startling: 0.4 gm., injected into the cheek, caused the total cessation of pain, without any ill effects.—*Centralbl. für Nervenheilkunde*, etc., 1885, No. 19.

PARTHENIN IN MALARIAL NEURALGIAS.—Neuralgias of malarial origin will, according to Dr. Esperon in a Havana medical journal, often yield to a medicine named *parthenin*, extracted from an indigenous plant called *escoba amarga*, bitter broom. He describes cases in which all the ordinary drugs were useless, or produced only temporary benefit, while parthenin, as soon as it was given, gave great relief, and was followed by a lasting cure. It is given in pill form, two grains being divided into twelve pills, and one given every two hours.—*Med. Times*, Aug. 8, 1885.

THE RESULT OF STRETCHING THE FACIAL NERVE FOR FACIAL SPASM.—Zesas has collected nineteen cases, including two of his own (*Wien. med. Wochenschr.*, 1885, Nos. 27, 28). Of these there was in three cases complete cure; four cases, marked improvement; ten cases, negative results. In two cases the result was unknown. Temporary improvement was observed in ten.—*Neurolog. Centralbl.*, 1885, No. 17.

This seems to be a somewhat better showing than that of other tables. See previous numbers of this JOURNAL.

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